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13. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said substrate is selected from the group consisting of a glass substrate, a quartz substrate, a ceramic substrate, a semiconductor substrate, a plastic substrate, and an organic resin substrate.

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14. A laser irradiation apparatus comprising:
a beam generating unit for generating a laser beam such that a cross section of said laser beam extends in both width and longitudinal directions;
a cylindrical lens group for dividing said laser beam in one of said width and longitudinal directions;
an optical system for overlapping divided laser beams,
wherein an edge portion of said cylindrical lens group is shielded.

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15. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said edge portion of said cylindrical lens comprises quartz ground glass.

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16. An apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising a means for irradiating the overlapped laser beam to a substrate.

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17. An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said substrate is selected from the group consisting of a glass substrate, a quartz substrate, a ceramic substrate, a semiconductor substrate, a plastic substrate, and an organic resin substrate.

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application and for allowing claims 2-4 over the prior art of record. The

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Examiner's Office Action of **February 28, 2001** has been received and its contents carefully noted. Filed concurrently herewith is a *Request for a One (1) Month Extension of Time* that extends the statutory period for response to **June 28, 2001**. Accordingly, Applicant submits that this response is timely filed.

Claims 1-4 were pending in this application prior to the aforementioned amendment, with claims 2-4 indicated by the Examiner as being allowable over the prior art of record. Due to the above actions, claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice, claims 2-4 have been amended and new claims 5-17 have been added to clearly recite additional protection to which Applicant is entitled. No issue of new matter is presented as a result of this amendment. Accordingly, claims 2-17 are now pending herein and are believed to be allowable over the cited prior art for the reasons stated below.

Initially, the Office Action appears to object to the format of the content of the specification. Applicant is currently reviewing the specification to correct any errors in form to the specification, and thus, will submit said an amendment (if appropriate) correcting said errors.

The Office Action rejects claim 1 under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by *Takenouchi et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,561,081). In response thereto, claim 1 has been canceled, thereby rendering this rejection moot.

Note that allowed claim 4 have been amended only to clarify clearly recite additional protection to which Applicant is entitled. Accordingly, it is submitted that these claims are still allowable for at least the reasons set forth in the Office Action. New claims 5-17 have been added and include claim limitations where were indicated by the Examiner as the basis for allowing claims 2-4. Accordingly, it is submitted that these claims are allowable for same reasons as those set forth in the Office Action.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner deem that any further action by the



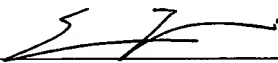


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Applicant would be desirable in placing this application in even better condition for issue, he is requested to contact the undersigned.

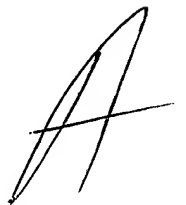
Respectfully submitted,

NIXON PEABODY LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric J. Robinson", written over a horizontal line.

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Marked-copy of amended claims 2-4.

2. (Amended) A laser irradiation apparatus comprising:
a beam generating unit;
a lens for dividing a laser beam in one direction; [and]
an optical system for overlapping divided laser beams[characterized in
that]; and
a slit [is formed] located between said beam generating unit and said lens[,]
for forming edges in the laser beam, which is vertical to said direction.

3. (Amended) A laser irradiation apparatus comprising:
an optical system for dividing a beam in one direction; and
an optical system for overlapping divided laser beams, [characterized in
that,]
wherein in said direction[,] a width of said optical system for dividing is
narrower than the maximum width of the laser beam before being divided.

4. (Amended) A laser irradiation apparatus comprising:
a cylindrical lens group for dividing a laser beam in one direction; and
an optical system for overlapping divided laser beams,[characterized in
that]
wherein a portion of the cylindrical lens of said cylindrical lens group is shielded.

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